



**tourism**

Department:  
Tourism  
**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**Tourism House, 17 Trevenna Street, Sunnyside. Private Bag X 424, PRETORIA - 0001**  
**Tel + 27 (0) 12 444 6000- Fax + 27 (0) 12 444 7000. Call Center: 0860 121 929**

## **Hanekom: SA must rethink travel**

**18 September 2014**

Cape Town - E-tourism presents South Africa with an extremely cost effective route to market ourselves, enabling business to build personal relationships with their customers, spurring word of mouth validation and giving tourism product owners the means to set them apart in an increasingly competitive environment.

This was the message of Tourism Minister Derek Hanekom at the 2014 E-Tourism Africa Summit in Cape Town.

"In tourism, in particular, the application of technology is opening up a direct artery between markets, trade partners, and influencers in the consumer buyer cycle and the media. It is changing the way that tourists interact with destinations - and with each other," said Hanekom.

The South African Industry abounds with examples of successful entrepreneurs embracing the opportunities presented in this new world.

Vamos Township Tours, operating from Langa, Cape Town, has built its competitiveness and its success through social media and digital review platforms.

The owner, Siviwe Mbila has built his business from scratch into a very successful tour operator enterprise - creating jobs and making truly meaningful and sustainable contributions to development in his community.

"Consider, for a moment, that international traveller arrivals took 62 years to surpass a billion - from a 1950 baseline of only 25 million to one billion in 2012. This represents compound annual growth of just over 4%," said Hanekom.

"Now compare this to the growth of social media. By the end of 2004, Facebook had just 1million users. Eight years later they have surpassed a billion users - a staggering compound annual growth rate of 137%."

More rapid change and disruption of business models are to follow, warned Hanekom.

"The ongoing innovation that exists at the Intersection of technology, travel and tourism will require all of us to constantly rethink travel - the theme of this summit. This is also a key part of the mandate of SA Tourism, our destination marketing organisation," he said.

"I am very encouraged by the growth of online travel bookings to South Africa through SA Tourism's online travel agency partners. In 2011, we had just over 150 000 international passengers booking through these partners' platforms. Just two years later, in 2013, this number had grown by 87% to reach 285 000 international passengers.

He said these results are no coincidence. They are possible as a result of SA Tourism and industry's presence on various partner platforms like TripAdvisor, partner online-travel

agencies like Expedia.

SA Tourism has taken various Initiatives to adapt its marketing efforts to respond to the opportunities presented by this changing marketing landscape.

For example, the #MeetSouthAfrica campaign recently invited 14 (9 international and 5 local) bloggers to come and Meet South Africa and share their perspectives via various social media platforms.

"Digital marketing continues to evolve at lightning speed and our commitment is to remain on the cusp of this curve," he said.

"I encourage you to continue to rethink travel - in order to build your businesses, to enhance our destination's offering and to meet the demands of increasingly tech-savvy international and domestic travellers."

**Source:** <http://www.fin24.com>